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ABSTRACT

This document presents a speech by the President of Florida International University concerning the creation of the institution. Florida International is an upper-level college located outside of Miami. The institution has been innovative in its physical structure as well as in its educational philosophy. Located at the site of the abandoned Tamiami Airport, the institution has utilized the control tower and old hangars as administrative and faculty office buildings. Two new multipurpose buildings have also been constructed at the site that will be used as classroom buildings. The institution is designed to be a completely commuter school, but it is hoped that apartments will be constructed nearby for those students who reside outside of commuting distance. The philosophy of the institution is urban oriented with an inbuilt community service program as its main core. FIU is also internationally oriented, and faculty and students alike are to reflect the international flavor that is evident in the Miami area. The institution opened its doors for the first time to students in the fall of 1972, just 2 months after the present speech was presented. (HS)

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"THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS"

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A PROGRESS REPORT
TO
THE FLORIDA BOARD OF REGENTS

Submitted by
Charles E. Perry
President
Florida International University

July 6, 1972

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"THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS"

On June 22, 1965, by an act of the Florida Legislature, the power was given to you to create a state university to serve Greater Miami and South Florida. But funding was not available until four years later when on July 11, 1969, you officially started this new state institution, named it Florida International University, and appointed me as its first president.

This morning I want to tell you about the development of Florida International -- an institution of unique character and purpose that has come about as a result of your assistance and encouragement. I want to tell you about the birth of a university!

At that meeting in Jacksonville, 1,090 days ago, you charged me with the responsibility to build a University that would serve this vast South Florida urban region. But, by the very choice of name for the new institution, you invited me and those who were to join me to think beyond the confines of a region, of a state, of a nation, to the needs of a world. You dared us to be one-world in both our viewpoint and in our educational mission.

To meet your challenge we have expressed the mission of this University in terms of three basic goals -- education of students, service to the community, and greater international understanding. My report to you this morning, therefore, will be presented within the context of what is being done to achieve these three important and exciting goals.

My first major task was to develop the shape and design of the University which you had asked to have ready for students in September, 1972. Most of you have heard me tell how I arrived on the Tamiami Campus site with three other recruits from the Board Office. We found an abandoned airport on 344 acres provided by the citizens of Dade County. We gave the old control tower a fresh coat of ivory paint, borrowed some furniture, used a few cardboard crates, and began a four-man operation to plan and develop a major state university in the largest metropolitan area in the United States without a public baccalaureate degree granting institution.

During the first several months, architects and consultants combined their efforts with an expanding Florida International team to develop a comprehensive master plan. The master plan, which you have all seen, was entitled The Birth of a University and Plans for Its Development. It was a great day when I received the first copy of that plan, for here was outlined in detail the actual operating procedure for the University through 1980. The philosophy of the institution and its needs in terms of organization, curriculum, finance, building and staff requirements were all discussed in this basic planning document.

Even though the master plan outlined the timetable for our major building program, interim facilities had to be located. At first the tower would suffice. Then five trailers were rented when the staff increased to 49. All structurally sound buildings on the old airport have been patched up and put to use at an estimated savings of \$120,000 -- one old hangar became our library where more than 100,000 volumes were processed by a hard working crew of librarians; another became our physical plant and maintenance shop; another our physical education and recreation building; and another was designated for use by the Fine Arts Department.

In January, 1971, a 10,000 square foot modular two-story office building was constructed at the cost of \$9.87 per square foot. As the staff grew from 59 in February, 1971, to 189 in September, 1971, four more trailers were rented and five were purchased. In January, 1972, the staff totaled 197; as of today we have 308 faculty and staff members and on September 1 we will number 650.

One of our most memorable moments came on January 25, 1971, when 2,500 people attended our official groundbreaking ceremonies for the first building now named Primera Casa. The then Secretary General of the United Nations U-Thant gave a brief, but brilliant address and Governor Askew presented an inspiring speech filled with encouragement for our international mission, as well as for our goals of the education of students and service to the community.

Presidents are often accused of having too much of an interest in building buildings. I suppose this is because in the sometimes hard-to-measure world of academe, buildings are all too frequently the only tangible accomplishments which mark the tenure of a president. If, however, Primera Casa is ever perceived as my legacy, I hope it will not be for its massiveness -- impressive though its 200 thousand square feet of space may be -- but rather for the attention which we have paid to creating a human scale throughout this facility to match the concern for the individual student which has characterized all our academic planning.

To achieve this human scale and to emphasize the critical importance of the aesthetic, a noted artist and sculptor was commissioned to create a mural for Primera Casa. His "Four Races of Man" stands as a constant -- and dramatic -- reminder that Florida International serves all people -- rich or poor, male or female, young or old -- of all races.

As part of our "humanizing" program for Primera Casa we have included a bold color and material design for each floor. A distinctive signage program, using international symbolism for the building and the campus, should also contribute to the cultivation of a friendly and interesting environment for learning and living.

Even though each floor of Primera Casa is the size of the playing field in the Orange Bowl, it has been designed for total flexibility. Space now being used for classrooms can be offices, and space for offices can be converted to classrooms. In addition, the area currently used by student services, book store and food service will be used to expand the library when the University Center is completed in 1973. The space utilized by the media center is scheduled for classrooms in 1974 when our second multi-function building opens.

These conversions, and others, were an integral part of the planning for Primera Casa and can be accomplished with an absolute minimum of time and renovation dollars. We believe that this type of planning is mandatory for an institution which must be ready to open for 5,000 students and prepared to handle more than 20,000 students in less than seven years.

The State University System's First Regional Computer Center will also be housed in Primera Casa. The Center services both Florida International and Florida Atlantic. We hope that the Center will become a model for similar programs throughout the state. On the other hand, we are not unmindful of the magnitude of the task involved in achieving effectiveness and efficiency in such a major joint undertaking.

Our second major building on the Tamiami Campus is designed primarily to accommodate faculty offices, although classrooms occupy most of the first floor. This building has also been designed to maximize utilization of space while at the same time encouraging an atmosphere conducive to openness and interaction among faculty and students alike. This second facility will house 420 faculty and staff members -- fine for its October opening, but all too soon inadequate as we grow at a rapid pace.

Because of our ultra-fast growth rate, we are now completing architectural plans for a University Center and our second multi-functional classroom building. We have also reported to the Chancellor our urgent need for additional buildings, which include a library and science laboratory-classroom facility.

One of the disadvantages of being an urban non-residential university, especially one not serviced by mass transportation, is the automobile. We are prepared to handle this situation, but we have no intention of looking like a used car lot. And we are not about to surrender to the automobile in any way -- our parking lots have landscaped mounds to hide the cars and no vehicles will be allowed inside the campus core.

The planning team decided early that Florida International would be in the education business only -- not the housing business, not the food business, not the book business, not the medical business. Private enterprise will provide all these services on the campus with the exception of housing. For housing we have encouraged builders to develop appropriate facilities near the campus to meet the needs of those students who come from outside our commuter region.

We are now in the early stages of planning for our Interama Campus. Just three weeks ago, I affixed my signature to a document that holds the key to the fulfillment of a dream -- a dream of a truly international university working in concert with a major international project. Known as Interama, this center for educational, environmental, cultural and trade activities will bring about a level of economic and intellectual activity that may well serve as a model of what tomorrow's world can really be.

As you know, the Florida Legislature has mandated that, by 1976, Florida International develop this north Dade County site in conjunction with the total Inter-American Center project. As you also know, Interama has been designated by President Nixon to be part of the nation's Bicentennial Celebration. We have been working with the Interama Authority, the Third Century Corporation and the Florida Bicentennial Commission to assure that close coordination is maintained with the plans for this most promising project. I am pleased to report that the Chancellor has authorized the University to begin to develop concrete plans to meet the 1976 deadline.

So much for the physical planning, which in our early days had to be given such a high priority in order to be ready for opening day. The results of this type of activity were easy to see and hear -- from blasting for the pilings of Primera Casa to the appearance of trailers in an office-like configuration, to the arrival of the prefabricated office building -- in sections on trucks from Fort Lauderdale; but of greater significance was the fact that the University, at the same time, was beginning to amass a cadre of academic planners capable of translating our academic blueprint into meaningful learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

As I reflect back on those first 1,000 days, I am convinced that one of the most significant decisions which we made was to operationalize immediately our service mission and thereby to learn first-hand what some of the community needs really were. Accordingly, Florida International did what no other new institution has ever done: the University activated its Division of University Services and Continuing Education in early 1970, and began to offer a broad spectrum of programs -- all this two and one half years before our first full-time student arrived.

To date more than 75 conferences have been conducted out in the community on such varied topics as drug education, Latin American literacy, mass transportation, urban sprawl, zoning, pollution and ecology. Many workshops have also been sponsored, including training programs for leaders in the Model Cities community, teachers of disadvantaged students, executives for airline food service companies and special programs for the men and women of the labor movement through our Institute for Labor Studies and Service.

The first Urban Agent program in the nation was also started -- a program of unlimited potential, we believe, in shaping the response of this and other urban universities in meeting tomorrow's needs. This Urban Agent program is based in Miami's "Model Cities Area" and helps us to identify real needs and problems so that the University can bring its resources and influence to bear in the rebuilding and revitalization of the inner city.

This program is also a bold attempt to carry out the service philosophy as developed by the land-grant colleges and universities in translating the emerging agricultural technology of 100 years ago into practical uses and progressive programs for the nation's farmers. Our role as an urban state university is not to teach farmers how to grow better corn. Instead our mission is to work with city people in an effort to create the physical, cultural, and intellectual setting which will enable us all to live richer and more effective lives in urban America.

The Migratory Child Compensatory Program is a further illustration of what we believe our responsibility is in helping to understand and to resolve some of the nation's critical social problems. We are the Florida Coordinator for this migratory program which is financed by a 500 thousand dollar State Department of Education grant.

Thirty-five social educators have been assigned by us to 24 Florida counties. The job of these specially trained people is to help the migrant child in all possible ways. Information on each child is computerized and fed into a national center. Now, for the first time in our history, we in Florida expect to know as much about migratory children as we know about migratory birds!

In another project, in conjunction with the Miami Beach Police Department, we designed and conducted the training program for the police officers for next week's Democratic National Convention. We saw this as a vital service need for the entire field of criminal justice and have jumped in where "angels fear to tread!"

In an effort to approach the urban and environmental problems on a regional basis we have joined with Florida Atlantic to establish a Center for Environmental and Urban Problems. This Center has been located at Fort Lauderdale and is another demonstration of cooperation between the two public institutions in this section of the state. It also points out the fact that today's urban problems cannot be divided by county lines or, for that matter, by international boundaries.

In brief, community service for this, or any new urban university must ultimately be judged in terms of the university's effectiveness in helping people translate the fruits of our technology into socially useful knowledge. It is in this context that I have urged that higher education replace the traditional academic slogan of "Publish or Perish" with a new slogan: "Service or Silence."

The key to the successful conduct of the programs which I have described is to be found, of course, in the hands and hearts of a faculty and staff committed to the University's three basic goals. Accordingly in all our recruitment the two questions which we have asked each prospective appointee to answer are these:

1. Are you genuinely committed to teaching and to counseling students as individuals?
2. Are you willing to make the community and the world your campus?

Furthermore, a conscientious effort has been made in all our recruitment to attract women, internationals, blacks, and other minorities. An urban university in a cosmopolitan city could do no less and be consistent with its mission. In some instances, specific goals were set to fill certain prominent faculty and administrative positions with blacks and women. This effort was made in the face of a highly competitive national market. Blacks, in particular, are in a position to secure higher salaries than our limited budget can provide. Nevertheless, I am grateful by the number of outstanding minority appointments that have been made. I am gratified because most of those who have joined us did so knowing full well that a greater monetary reward could have been reaped elsewhere.

Invariably prospective faculty, staff, and students have questioned us about the "I" in the University's name. Because of the importance of the international commitment to all of us, I want to tell you the four steps being taken to make this an international university:

1. The College and each of the five Schools have set initial goals for the recruitment of key faculty who by birth, academic training, overseas experience, and language expertise are internationally oriented.
2. The College and Schools are committed to "internationalizing" their curriculum, starting now and increasing in that direction over the next few years.
3. The Division of University Services and Continuing Education is planning an annual international conference and cultural series which will bring knowledgeable persons and performers to Miami and to our campus.
4. Student exchange programs will be encouraged to the extent that these are financially feasible. A major foreign student program is essential to the fulfillment of our international mission.

But to internationalize a publicly supported university involves more than all this: it involves an attitude, a tone, a feeling, an understanding and a willingness to look at education beyond the traditional borders of the United States or Western Europe. And it involves a desire to be truly concerned about the problems of the world -- not just the problems of this region, of this State, of this nation.

The development of the Interama Campus, as I said earlier, will add immeasurably to the international thrust of this University. The Interama complex will increase our ability to draw, house and educate international students and to sponsor meaningful world-wide conferences and training programs.

By our geography, we also have a special obligation to work with the thousands of Cubans and other Latins residing in Greater Miami, America's fastest growing international center. Several special programs for these individuals have been developed already -- the Cuban CPA training program is one major example where the University's training role has been effectively utilized.

We have already started to establish close ties with various nations and institutions in the Caribbean. In addition, we are currently exploring future working relationships in South and Central America.

All of these activities are a part of our effort to become a truly international institution in reality as well as in name. This will not happen overnight, however. The journey will be a long one; but our course has been charted and we are under way!

I would now like to take a moment to talk about Florida International's style of management for the past 1,000 days. Perhaps two words describe it most effectively -- openness and involvement. In all our decision making we have tried to be as open and direct as is humanly possible. Our basic organizational structure, which I will not take time to discuss now, is intended to give maximum authority and responsibility for the educational process to the individuals directly responsible for the particular program.

Our entire budget process was totally open -- and to some this first experience was most difficult. Our style also is reflected by our deep concern for the decision making and governance process. We believe that discussion, debate and dialogue are essential to the intellectual life of the academic community.

One aspect of our academic organization is of great interest to all of us -- that is the service role for the College of Arts and Sciences in support of the Professional Schools. Thus we have endeavored to recruit a faculty in the College capable of accomplishing two complimentary goals. The first is to provide such training in the humanities, social sciences, or the natural and applied sciences as may be required by students enrolled in the Schools of Business and Organizational Sciences, Education, Health and Social Services, Hotel, Food and Travel Services, and Technology. The College's second goal is to serve its own students, especially those who may want the in-depth training required for graduate school.

We are also encouraging team teaching to accentuate interdisciplinary relationships so essential to the responsiveness and vitality of the University's faculty and academic programs.

Our non-traditional grading systems, which you recently approved, represent yet another significant development in the design of our curriculum. The experimentation which our dual system of grading makes possible should contribute immeasurably to the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process particularly in the School of Education with its performance-based curriculum design.

The one major academic goal that we will not achieve on opening day, largely because the budget could not be stretched to provide adequate support, is the full operation of the School of Technology. However, I can report to you today that the approval of the technology Dean at your last month's meeting insures that the School will open next year -- and it will meet a massive and urgent need in this area. In the meantime, the other academic units are enrolling a number of technology students for courses that they will need for their degree program.

All of the discussion to this point centers around our concern to be ready for students who will be on hand this fall to share with us those final birth pains. With applications for admission now numbering more than six thousand, it is clearly apparent that Florida International will begin operation with more students than any other University in the history of the United States.

All but ten percent of these students will come from South Florida. Well over half of our students will be enrolled full time; over a third of them will be married, and over three-fourths will be working. Of those working while attending college, twenty-four percent will be working more than twenty hours a week, and nearly twenty-five percent of our students will be working full time. And most of our students will drive over thirty minutes to get to the campus.

Florida International students give every indication of being extremely anxious to seek a college education. To meet their needs, as well as to assure maximum utilization of space, we expect to be open from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. We are also prepared to provide weekend classes if there is sufficient demand for courses at that time.

Although the 1965 enabling legislation authorized this state university to be a four-year baccalaureate institution with graduate programs, the Board staff and the early planning team decided to open Florida International as an upper division and graduate institution. This decision was reached primarily because of the high quality of academic programs offered by the community colleges in this region.

Broward Community College to the north, Miami-Dade, with three campuses in this county, and Florida Keys Community College to the south, provide the mainstream of Florida International's students. Coordinating councils were established in 1970 to work with each of these community colleges, both to determine curriculum needs and to assure proper articulation and coordination.

In essence, these three institutions have played an invaluable role in all the University's planning and programming. From our viewpoint these relationships have been both valuable and stimulating to faculty and administrators alike. Indeed, you should know that we have made extensive use of junior college students to help in our planning and to serve as student assistants in a variety of campus roles.

Similar coordinating councils were also established with the area's private colleges and universities. It was recognized from the very beginning that the region would benefit most if the institutions worked in harmony. This has been accomplished, and all have profited from the mutual support and cooperation.

In addition to the regular program of studies, Florida International in conjunction with the State University System is offering degree programs throughout the entire state with the External Degree -- one of the most exciting developments in the field of education.

And vital to the total education program, both internally and externally, is an outstanding sports and recreation program. Our decision to have recreation fields and facilities and five intercollegiate sports in the initial year is a first for American higher education. Coaches are already busy organizing in baseball, golf, soccer, tennis and wrestling. These are the sports receiving popular support in our community colleges and should be very successful at Florida International.

Supportive of all this activity has been a dedicated core of professionals in our business office. During the past thirty-three months, we have processed more than 3,500 purchase orders; conducted more than 150 bid openings; handled 225 thousand pieces of incoming mail and 110 thousand pieces of outgoing mail; held more than two thousand career service job interviews, and paid invoices totaling \$13,000,000.

The University began with an operating budget of \$350,000 and a fixed capital outlay program of \$1,400,000. Today we are beginning the fiscal year with an operating budget of almost \$10,000,000 and a fixed capital outlay release of approximately \$24,000,000. Yes, a major funding program to date...but only a prologue to the future.

To inform the public of the opportunities provided by this new university, cooperation of all media was enlisted. And the response was great! More than a million words have been printed or spoken by the media to tell the story of Florida International -- in TV and radio programs, magazine articles, news features, and journals. Our faculty and staff have also cooperated by giving more than 500 speeches in the community.

I also want to pay tribute to the people of Greater Miami and South Florida. Their support has been tremendous! And their willingness to give of time, thought and talent to this new institution will always be appreciated.

So, in closing, as final curriculum designs are being approved, as new faculty members are ready to come on board, as secretaries and maintenance people are being recruited by the dozens, as parking lots are being landscaped, as Primera Casa reaches the final stages of completion, as students are being pre-registered, as construction on the second building continues, as plans for the third and fourth buildings come off the drawing board, as more staff and faculty are recruited, I can say, with great pride and confidence, that in seventy-five days from today a University will be born -- a University that will proudly take its place as a full-fledged member of the State University System of Florida.